

THE REFORMER.

Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth.—*Jeremiah*, v. 1.

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PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN NEW ORLEANS.

“By a letter recently received from New Orleans,” says the Religious Chronicle, “we learn that the spiritual condition of that city is more deplorable than ever. ‘The state of the Presbyterian Society is truly disheartening—congregation small, and growing less—no harmony—no communion seasons,’” &c. &c.

From the great parade made by the Presbyterians at the time of laying the corner stone of their grand meeting-house at New Orleans, and the expense of the building, no other results than such as have taken place, could be reasonably anticipated. Involved in debt by their extravagance, the Presbyterian congregation at one time expected the stage players would get possession of their house of worship and convert it into a theatre. To prevent this sad reverse, the Legislature were applied to for relief, and clergymen went forth preaching charity sermons and making collections. One visited this city on such an errand, and preached and received contributions. How much was obtained, or what became of the money collected, is not known; but sometime afterwards the meeting-house, which it is said cost upwards of 40,000 dollars, was sold at sheriff's sale for about 20,000. It was purchased by a Jew, who, notwithstanding his heretical faith, has allowed the congregation ever since to occupy it as their place of worship.

Such is the termination of the farce acted at New Orleans, and which was headed by a young man from a theological seminary, with a salary of 4000 dollars per annum. For particulars, see

the first and fourth numbers of the Reformer, 1820.

[*From the Ontario (N.Y.) Repository.*]

The Bible Society of Cayuga county recently took measures to ascertain the number of families in said county who were destitute of the Holy Scriptures. In a late notice given by the Society, in the public prints, it is stated that “it is quite clearly ascertained that more than a thousand families in this county are destitute of the Bible, and without the means of procuring it; and that another thousand are destitute who would be willing to purchase the Bible at cost, if it could be brought within their reach.” We will not undertake to doubt the above statement, except in one particular, viz. we cannot believe there are one thousand families in that, or any other county in this State, so poor as to be unable to purchase a Bible, which can be had of any of the booksellers for 75 cents.

[Many of the papers in the State of New York make very severe reflections on the statement given by the above Bible Society, and consider it “truly humiliating and degrading to the county.” Says the Editor of the *Cayuga Patriot*,]

More than two thousand destitute of the Bible! We must treat this subject lightly. We have a personal respect for most of the gentlemen engaged in the Society. Nevertheless, we do not believe the statement, because we do not know where to look for so great a deficiency of Bibles. Take the poorest street in this village or the poorest neighbourhood in the county, and we venture to say one will

find no such deficiency as stated. We wish to see the Bible generally circulated; but we wish to see no deceptions, no "pious frauds," practised on community.

P. S. A magistrate of this town informs us, that in attending at the houses of *paupers*, in which cases it was necessary to administer an oath, he has seldom found an instance where there was not a Bible in the family. How does this fact tally with the *two thousand families* that are destitute?

[From the *Boston Recorder & Telegraph* of March 24.]

Messrs. Editors—As the circulation of fiction in the same style with truth, especially when they both proceed from the same fountain, tends to the disparagement of the latter, I have been long pained, in common with many others, on account of the publication of fictitious Tracts. Would not the excision from the list, of such as are merely fictitious, be an improvement? And could such an amendment produce any harm, or give any one just cause of offence? Truly I think not. But such a measure, I know, would be hailed by *very many* with the most lively satisfaction.

Now there are in the United States several denominations, particularly one derived from the established church of Scotland, which declare without scruple concerning Tracts, that "*they are all lies*." Thus it happens that truth itself suffers for no other reason but that of being found in bad company.

There are a multitude of facts which have come to the writer's knowledge, which show in the strongest light that truth and fiction ought not to be blended in religious narrative. I will mention one which came under my own observation. A Presbyterian clergyman coming into the parlour of a respectable merchant in one of our inland cities, presently began to look over a considerable number of Tracts, and soon found one which he deliberately tore to pieces before the company.

The merchant, a pious man, seemed quite astonished. The clergyman said it was a notorious falsehood. The merchant's daughter, who had been religiously educated and was of a serious disposition, replied in the utmost simplicity, "I suppose a great many of them are so." This sentiment, though erroneous as it respects the proportion of those Tracts which are fictitious, is yet the sentiment of thousands and tens of thousands, if not of millions. Truth needs not a temporary or fictitious support.

[The foregoing admissions are remarkable, when we take into consideration the source from whence they have emanated, and the channel by which they are conveyed to the public.]

Since the above was in type, we find that a writer in a subsequent number of the *Recorder & Telegraph*, has come forward in defence of fictitious Tracts and narratives for promoting the cause of religion. His communication is headed, "*On fictitious narratives employed to convey religious instruction*." The first paragraph reads thus:

"Every benevolent man who loves the religion of Jesus Christ, will desire that its grand principles may be communicated to all his uninstructed and unenlightened brethren. Of this class of ignorant men, blind to the glory of the gospel, there are many even in christian countries; men who cannot be drawn to the house of God to listen to the words of the preacher, who will not read the Bible, and who are repelled by every thing in the form of a sermon. Yet these men may be attracted by an interesting religious narrative, like the *Shepherd of Salisbury Plain*, or the *Dairyman's Daughter*, [here then it is admitted that the '*Dairyman's Daughter*' is a *fictitious* narrative;] and in reading it may be instructed in religion, and through the grace and blessing of God may be saved;—saved in this way, when, it would seem, they would not have been

saved in any other way;—when, in all probability, without such a narrative, they would have remained ignorant of truth, and hostile to goodness. Here then is an undeniable and immense benefit, resulting from such a [fictitious] narrative, its instructions having been accompanied by the spirit of God. Is not this result a sufficient answer to all objections, which may be made to the employment of this method of conveying religious truth?"

So then our country is to be inundated by fictitious narratives in the name of Tracts, sent forth by innumerable Tract Societies, under pretence of conveying religious truth and saving the souls of men.

[From the *New York Telescope*.]

Give us money or our Bible and Missionary, Education and Tract Societies, must soon be abandoned and die.

[From the *New York Observer*.]

Messrs. Editors,—What must be done? The United Foreign Missionary Society, the United Domestic Missionary Society, and the American Tract Society, at this moment need at least *ten thousand dollars* each, to enable them to meet the responsibilities which the Christian public have warranted them to assume.

The Lord has put this money into the hands of his people, and were they disposed, it might all be raised in a single day. And no doubt a much larger sum *would* be raised even in this city, if every christian felt as that man in a neighbouring state did, who, after having obligated himself to pay 1000 dollars to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, mounted his horse and rode more than fifty miles to pay an additional sum of 450 dollars. That man, though he lived and died in obscurity, and never possessed at one time more than 5000 dollars, seemed to have some very correct ideas of the proper manner of replenishing the treasuries of those societies which are designed to spread the Gos-

pel. When he heard the call of his Saviour, [for money] he did not wait to hear it repeated by men, but knowing his master's will, he immediately performed it. Happy for our world if it were so with every christian. Then would the money which is expended by these societies in collecting funds be otherwise appropriated, and the men who are employed in this laborious and thankless service, might lift up their voices and proclaim the gospel on heathen ground.

But this service must be performed or these societies must die; and they must meet the expense so long as men refuse to come and *bring* their offerings to the Lord, [viz. their money.] The present state of benevolent feeling in our country is such, that if there were no special exertions made to keep it alive, and to increase it, it would soon become extinct; our Bible, Missionary, Education, and Tract Societies must soon be abandoned. And what christian could endure the thought of seeing these institutions, which are the glory of our country—the safeguard of our civil and religious rights abandoned? [for want of money]—Institutions which bear the impress of heaven, and whose great object is to guide men to that holy place—an object which the reason and conscience of every man approves, [an absolute falsehood]—an object, the full importance of which we can never ascertain. With this object before us, and fixing our eye upon the last command of our Saviour, we repeat the question, What must be done?

Remarks by the Editor of the Telescope.

The above language is really shocking and blasphemous, and we are constrained to believe that every honest and reflecting person will view it in this light. Money is substituted in the place of Jesus Christ, and relied upon as the principal or only means of spreading his Gospel. The principles of Simon Magus were never more con-

spicuously displayed than in the above article, and it is a reproach to the writer, as well as the editors for publishing it.

We challenge any person to bring forward proof from the New Testament to warrant or support this begging system. It cannot be done: it is in direct opposition to the very letter and spirit of christianity. Christ and his apostles so far from pleading in such language for money, absolutely forbid it; and this was done that his kingdom (which he says is not of this world) might be established by his spirit alone, without the least dependence upon gold or silver, or any thing of an earthly nature.

The advocates for these unscriptural and popular schemes now find it necessary to make the most fervent appeals to the public to keep their cause from sinking. Indeed they openly declare, that if people will not give them *money* these institutions must sink and die.

This is a plain, positive, and undeniable proof, that they are not founded by God; if they were agreeably to his word, *the gates of hell could never prevail against them*. But it is very true as asserted, that if the public would refuse to lend them aid, and would not give them a single dollar, their foundation, which is built upon the sand, would tumble to ruin, and sink into oblivion, as one day will most assuredly take place.

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For the Reformer.

A HIRED AND LEARNED MINISTRY.

Any one who admits or acknowledges that a hireling priest is endued with spiritual gifts for the ministry, must also admit that the *gift of God* may be purchased *with money*. It is true that this practice of hiring a priest has been so long cherished, and sanctioned by time and usage, that its correctness is not much questioned; and a clergyman receives his stipends with as little compunction as a miller takes toll from a grist. For one, I wish not to

partake of the fruits of such men's labour. *A bad tree cannot produce good fruit*. While I believe the scriptures, and that the favour of heaven and the gifts of God cannot be purchased with money, I am under no apprehensions that my withholding contributions to encourage a corrupt order of men in making merchandise of the gospel will be charged to my infidelity. The best evidence which a man can give of pure and undefiled religion, is, to be indifferent with respect to the opinion of the world concerning him, prompted as it is, by pride and sinister motives, and to act solely in reference to that Being who knows the secrets of all hearts.

The stigma and reproach which the clergy and their friends would gladly inflict on any one who withstands their authority and exactions, has its origin and incentive in temporal views. It is no matter what pretensions they may make, or name assume, while their conduct manifests their purpose and intentions. My belief is that the hope of these men in futurity cannot be thought an enviable one; the general tenor of divine revelation goes to assure us that if they seek and receive the favours and applause of this world, they risk an eternal inheritance in a better. Money, honour and distinction, being the chief objects of pursuit among the clergy, if they could not attain these by preaching, we should see them aim to do it by other means. The tree is clearly known then by its fruit. If they do not choose to be governed by the precepts of the New Testament, which enjoin humility, and even deadness to the world, they evidently belong to a kingdom in opposition to the kingdom of Christ.

Look, moreover, at the perversions of Scripture by the clergy and their advocates, for the purpose of founding and propagating systems and doctrines for their own aggrandizement. Every sort of construction is given to enable them to bend the Scriptures to their

own views and wishes. A departure from the simple worship of God according to the plain tenor and clear injunctions of Scripture has made way for the Man of Sin. An attempt is now making to produce a uniformity of sentiment and feeling among corrupt professors,—and this is furthered by all or most of the leading sects giving their power and interest to the kingdom of the beast: but its throne is shaken, and the kingdom is filled with darkness, which makes them gnaw their tongues for pain. This, moreover, causes them to labour with increasing activity and zeal to fortify and defend it with all the power, riches, eloquence and learning which they can command.

Through a long succession of ages it has been the business of kings, priests, and their dignitaries to delude the great body of mankind, and to trample them under foot. The mystery of iniquity began to display itself at an early period of the christian church, when the spirit of pride, and the love of power and riches began to predominate among the christian brethren. Discords, sects, and heresies next arose to distract and divide the church. Sect arrayed itself against sect, until each settled down into a worldly spirit, and exhibited all the pomp, eloquence and learning possible, to command respect and receive attention. The spirit and principles thus early planted have been cherished and strengthened ever since. To aid and encourage them in this day, the most profound study of the original languages, as to the derivation of words, their dialects, &c. must be employed. Commentators, both ancient and modern, must be referred to, consulted, and compared: and astronomy, mathematics, natural and moral philosophy, history, &c. &c. must be thoroughly attained—And for what? To understand the simple doctrines of the Gospel contained in a small octavo volume, as though it was intended only for a privileged order, who are to be main-

tained in style and dignity for revealing its secrets and blessings to the rest of mankind. Is this preaching the simple gospel of Jesus Christ in the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth, or in the words which man's wisdom teacheth?

That gospel which was first preached and propagated by unlearned and unlettered fishermen, and made plain and intelligible to babes and sucklings, though hid from the wise and prudent of this world, wants not the aid of human power and ingenuity. Those whom our Lord instructed and sent forth to preach his gospel, "said none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come." They then wanted not to be endued with the human power and wisdom we have been speaking of; nor is it now necessary to go the whole round of the sciences to know how to preach Jesus Christ and him crucified. To suppose that the whole circle of the sciences must be gone through in order to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, when he himself made choice of unlearned and unlettered men to promulgate it, is the highest absurdity. Paul, one of the most learned and accomplished scholars, was, after his conversion, the most pointed to declaim against the excellency of speech or of man's wisdom to declare the testimony of God. He discarded the use of both learning and money for the purposes of spreading the gospel. The clergy of this day require both, and dispense their religious favours, particularly to the rich and great, in proportion to the reward they expect from them.

Heresies first originated among the Jewish Scribes and doctors, and heathen philosophers; and Arianism was preached at the first Christian school in Alexandria. In the controversies which arose to maintain the dogmas which were set up between the Christian sects and heathen philosophers, the former resorted to human learning for defence. The ministers of the gos-

pel were thus required to be learned, and preaching became, as now in the United States, a mere trade, like law and physic. When carnal weapons and the wisdom of words were used for defending the christian religion, instead of the word of faith, it degenerated into a science,—and the gospel has ever since been corrupted by the doctrines and commandments of men. The theatre of action has been constantly extending, and has become so enlarged by the conflicting views and doctrines of different sects, who disregard the simplicity of the gospel, that all the jesuitical establishments of former days, and the theological seminaries of the present day, have grown out of it. All the fashionable churches, so called, throughout the country and the world, are nothing else than schools of human learning and philosophy, and temples of idolatry to which the gay and thoughtless multitudes are attracted in all the splendour of attire, for the purpose of carnal gratification. If this does not constitute the essence of infidelity and deism, notwithstanding a nominal or pretended adherence to christianity, I do not understand the import of the words.

A VIRGINIAN.

For the Reformer.

[Communicated from the state of N. York.]

I am glad to find that you have admitted to the columns of the Reformer some pro's and con's, if only on an old controversy—The advocate for the sanctification of the first day of the week, will no doubt be much applauded by the clergy on that side of the question for the stale arguments and probabilities of his laboured communication.

It were to be wished that they would also preach against profaning any of the other days of the week by themselves or others. Rumour says that several of these self-styled reverend divines have been guilty of *lobbying* for funds, as will seem to appear by

the following extract from the New York Courier of 1st April.

“More than half a million of dollars has been paid into the treasury of New York from lotteries, since 1801, and been appropriated to the endowment of colleges, charitable and pious institutions, the education of children, and public improvements.”

Now this “*doing evil that good may come*” by such characters, has done more harm to the bulk of the community, than all their sermons about sanctifying the Sabbath ever has or ever will do good. The sanction given by the clergy to raise funds by lotteries (the receiver is as bad as the thief, is an old proverb) has been as the letting out of water—It has encouraged a spirit of speculative kind of gambling that flows through the veins and arteries, and corrupts the morals of old and young, rich and poor, black and white.

H. I.

For the Reformer.

During the past year I have read several numbers of the Reformer, and approve of its object, believing it well calculated to call the attention of men to ancient christianity, in opposition to the fashionable religion of the day in which we live. The attentive observer of the present appearance of christianity in the world, who carefully compares that appearance with the original draft of that religion in the New Testament, clearly perceives the scriptures fulfilled by a general apostacy from the faith once delivered to the saints; and that the various classes of men now bearing the christian name are enveloped in the bewildering fog of a vain superstition. The people of our country through the good providence of God, possess the Scriptures of Truth, which are as a burning and shining light, bringing life and immortality to light, and altogether sufficient through faith, without human aid, for the grand purpose of man's salvation. But among us, as in all the world called christian, a body of men have sprung up, who,

under the garb of christian teachers, with a view to their own worldly emolument, have imposed false glosses upon the scriptures and thereby greatly obscured their native lustre—yea, almost extinguished the clear light of divine truth, reflected by the written word, and substituted in its stead the ignis fatuus of their own teaching. These men arrogate to themselves the high character of Christ's ambassadors, hold themselves up as solely possessing the requisite qualifications of gospel preachers, and as exclusively vested with the right of interpreting the scriptures and declaring the mind of God to men—Yea, to such a pitch of arrogance have they arrived as to place their own productions, called sermons, composed in the words of man's wisdom, not only on a level with the scriptures, but above the written word of God, as more efficacious in the conviction and conversion of sinners.

A remarkable instance of this may be seen in the Assembly's Catechism, a production which in the minds of a great proportion of modern religionists, possess an authority equal to the scriptures themselves. To the question,—“How does the word become effectual to salvation,” the answer is, “The spirit of God maketh the reading, but *especially* the preaching of the word an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners.” Here the preaching of the clergy is expressly set above the reading of the inspired scriptures, as being a more especial mean of salvation. And the universal practice of modern professors clearly evinces that there is no one dogma of their creed on which they rely with more unshaken confidence than this—that the preaching of their ministers is the special appointed mean for the conviction and conversion of sinners, and more effectual to salvation than any other. It is manifest to every observer that the grand thing in view among all classes of religionists in attending what is called public worship,

is to hear the preaching of the minister, as though the reading of the scriptures constituted no part of that worship. And if at any of their religious assemblies there happens to be no clergyman at hand to entertain them with his preaching, they will substitute a printed discourse of some popular preacher, in place of the scriptures, by which they show conclusively their most decided preference of the words of the teaching of man's wisdom above the teaching of the oracles of truth. Now, under these circumstances, while the teachers inculcate, and their deluded votaries believe, that their preaching is more effectual to salvation than the preaching of the inspired prophets and apostles, we cannot be surprised that there should be so little private examination of the scriptures, and that the influence of the clergy should be so powerful and extensive. Though this state of things may seem to present a gloomy prospect to the mind of the christian whose understanding has been opened to discern the clear light of truth shining in the scriptures, yet it presents no ground of despondency, “for there is good ground to hope and expect, that the same truth shaking off the load heaped upon it, may yet march erect, armed in its own power, fearless of opposition, and make its way as fast, and as far, as its high destiny requires.” For thus saith the Lord by the prophet, “So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.” And the scriptures assure us that the kingdom which the clergy have erected for themselves, and which has been introduced by all power and signs and wonders of a lie, shall be consumed by the spirit of the Lord's mouth, and destroyed by the brightness of his coming.

W.

For the Reformer.

THE CATECHISM THE WORD OF GOD.

A young person in the vicinity of my residence, who is deprived of hearing, was sent to the Asylum of the Deaf and Dumb in Philadelphia. On his return home, he showed the people how he could write and converse with them by writing. His attainment did himself honour, and convinced me that such an institution was worthy of patronage. But, to my astonishment, I found that human *creeds* had been imposed on him. A respectable gentleman of the Presbyterian order, asked him in writing whether they taught him religion. He answered yes. He wrote many things respecting Christ, and among other things he wrote, "*He [the instructor] teaches us the Catechism which is the word of God.*" Now, whether the instructor designedly imposed on this pupil or not, I do not know. If it was through inadvertency, he ought to be careful in future that his pupils correctly understand that the catechism is the *opinions of men* and not the *word of God*; and not send them out from under his care with wrong instruction; but, if it was designedly done, it is abominable. CYRIL.

For the Reformer.

[Communicated from Massachusetts.]

Mr. Editor,—There is a similarity of expression and ideas between persons taught by the same teacher, in spiritual as well as in natural things. So far as men are inspired with a true understanding of the nature and fitness of things, they will speak the same things, and see objects in the same light. True knowledge of spiritual things ever did and ever will proceed from that spirit which searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God; and as this spirit is eternally the same, it cannot manifest truths of an opposite nature to the children of men. So far as men write or speak from an understanding received from God, it

will be in perfect unison with all that was ever written or spoken in the same way.

An article in a late number of the Reformer, from the pen of William Andrews, (a person I never heard of before) tended to confirm the belief that has of late rested on my mind, viz. that persons in different parts of the globe, without any knowledge of each other, are beginning to see the same things, and feel the same divine truths; evincing that they are taught by one and the same invisible teacher, even the Spirit of Truth, that guides into all truth and out of all error.—Upon this rock will the church yet become "clear as the moon, bright as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners,"—while the people will rage and priests imagine a vain thing.

Volumes are yearly printed descriptive of what is termed revivals of religion in the earth, but by the by, they prove revivals to nothing but sectarianism. The spark of divine life sometimes kindled, in many is soon crushed beneath the power and the wisdom of man, for the want of a right understanding that in the gospel dispensation there is but one teacher—"the power and the wisdom of God." Many sincere minds for the want of this knowledge, begin in the spirit and end in the flesh, and thus reap corruption, instead of life and peace divine. O may the Lord hasten on a true revival of religion in the earth. A. P. S.

THE POPE ALARMED.

The London New Monthly Magazine for March, contains the following letter from Rome, under date of January 4, 1826.

The universal jubilee has terminated, and his Holiness has published a Bull on the occasion. This official document signed at St. Peter's at Rome, bears date the 25th of last month, the third year of the pontificate of Leo the Twelfth. Facts anterior to this, though of rather recent date, contribute to increase the uneasiness felt by the all-wise

and provident Romans. Of this you will be convinced by the following extracts. All impartial minds must be now satisfied that there is a project ripened into maturity, the object of which is to organize a real crusade against the friends of prevailing ideas, and to evoke the *auto da fe* against works of genius; to persecute the liberty of the press in every quarter, and to guarantee a profane "encroachment" on the temporal power. In fact, we are here alarmed at the direction which government wishes to give to the march of the religious and political affairs of all nations, by uttering threats, with jesuitical address, against the rights and independence of Princes, as well as against the prerogatives of civil authority. In fine, the following will make you feel with new force, the blows of that sword, the handle of which is at Rome, but the edge every where:—"Above all, exert your whole efforts," says the Bull of his Holiness to the Catholic Clergy, "to keep the faithful from poisoned food, which is every where treacherously offered to them for their destruction; discover the snares concealed in every direction, and put the people on their guard against the infamous torrent of so much error, and against the impious doctrines of so many perverse men. And if perchance you meet with those deluded men, who endure not sound doctrine, but shut their ears against truth to open them to fables,—thunder, and do not stop till Christ, by you and in you, may reign every where, and triumph over all things. Be not terrified by the number, malice and fury of your enemies. Above all, use the greatest vigilance, and most persevering care, that you may expel from among your flocks so many impious, impure, and pestilential books, which the infernal enemy of human nature has vomited forth on all sides with an incredible inundation. It is extremely afflicting to all good men to see that this *pestilence of books* not only perverts manners, but even

saps the foundation of faith, and injures and overturns the dogmas of our holy religion. Grasp therefore, animated with one mind and the same sentiments—grasp the sword of faith, and cover yourselves with its shield, in order to repulse the envenomed arrows of an active and fierce enemy—fight as heroes. Entertain no apprehension but that our most beloved children in Jesus—all Catholic Kings and Princes—may declare themselves decidedly for you. In fact, the greatest number of them have addressed to us devout and humble supplications that the Jubilee might be extended into the kingdom and jurisdiction of each of them. It is impossible but that they will rejoice in seeing you seconded with zeal in every thing necessary to attain that salutary end, and exert themselves to assist you in the holy work by the aid of their authority. No Prince is ignorant that it is written: 'there is no power which proceedeth not from God;' and again, 'by me let Kings reign, and legislators determine what is just, by me let Princes command, and the powerful decide with justice.' They dissemble not, and the experience of latter times has shown to them evidently, that the cause of the Church and the cause of Princes, are but one and the same cause identified, because we shall never render to Cæsar what is due to Cæsar, if above all we do not faithfully render to God what is due to God." It adds, "You are surrounded by a crowd of false prophets, who, under the deceitful appearance of piety, try to destroy virtue. They affect to destroy abuse and superstition, while they exert themselves to overturn completely all the foundations of religion, and they invite you to liberty and to shake off the yoke of Princes. Reject far from you all sorts of impious books, because they represent the golden cup of the Babylonians—a cup full of all sorts of abominations, in which a mortal poison is given to the imprudent to drink. Feel no repugnance to imitate the faith

and example of the first Christians, who intrusted to the apostles 'to be cast into the fire' all the books which they could meet with containing vain and fallacious doctrines."

BARBAROUS LEGISLATION.

The following is the amendment on the law of sacrilege, lately adopted in the French Chamber of Peers. I. The profanation of the sacred vessels shall be punished with death, if it has been accompanied by the two following circumstances: 1st. If the sacred vessels contained, at the moment of the crime, the consecrated elements. 2nd. If the profanation is committed publicly—when it is committed in a public place, and in presence of several persons. II. The profanation of the sacred vessels shall be punished by perpetual hard labour, when not accompanied by one of the two circumstances stated in the preceding article. III. The profanation of the consecrated elements, committed publicly, shall be punished with death. The execution shall be preceded by the *amende honorable* of the condemned person, before the principal church of the place where the crime shall have been committed, or of the place where the Court of Assize sits. The amendment proposed by the Count de Bastard, and seconded by the Viscount de Chateaubriand, and which was rejected by a majority of 108 voices against 104, was as follows: "The profanation of the sacred vessels is punished by hard labour for a limited time. The profanation of the sacred elements is punished by hard labour for life." The entire law was adopted by the chamber, by a majority of 127 to 92.

[From the *Christian Intelligencer*.]

LAW RELIGION.

A man is now living in Westbrook, [Mass.] by the name of Adam Barbour, who had his large *Bible* sold at auction, in the time of the Revolution, (while the town was called Falmouth) to pay ministerial taxes. The holy book

was purchased by one Enoch Freeman, who is also living. There are several others who witnessed the sale; as also of his saddle, which was sold at the same time.

Another man in this town, by the name of John Millett, was prosecuted for having been absent from public worship for four Sundays. But he got the fine remitted, by proving that he could not attend, and be decent or comfortable; for his *only coat* had been previously attached and sold to pay his minister tax. As Millett was a very poor man, the court decided that he should be excused from a fine and have his coat returned, provided he would attend church!

Would it not be well to have these facts transmitted to posterity as a solemn warning to those who are lusting after a *law religion*?

PRIZE ESSAYS.

In the *Boston Recorder & Telegraph* of April 7th, is the following paragraph:

"It was highly gratifying to all the friends of Christ, that when a premium of fifty dollars was offered for the best written Tract on the duty of professors of religion to consecrate their property to the spread of the Gospel, *forty-five* able pens began to move, and a Tract was produced that will compel every candid reader to acknowledge it his duty to give according to his means, however reluctant he may be to comply."

A premium for such a tract may be truly said to be giving away money for the purpose of obtaining a larger quantity. How much is *said*, and *written*, and *done*, in this day, to get property and funds to spread the Gospel. Did Christ or the Apostles resort to this method to spread the Gospel; or have the truly pious ever done it in any age of the world? Every enlightened christian must know that any thing else rather than the christian religion will be

promoted by such monied and mercenary schemes.

STATE OF RELIGION IN VIRGINIA.

The Synod of Virginia, in presenting to the churches under their care a view of the state of Religion within their limits during the past year, observe, that they "find more than usual cause of humiliation and sorrow. Few similar periods of time," say they, "have elapsed since the organization of this body, in which they have not been permitted to record more numerous and greater triumphs of divine grace, than have been witnessed during the year now under review. And a number of new churches, which not long ago were blessed with revivals of religion, appear to have sunk into a state of lamentable coldness and insensibility. This fact is so remarkable, and indeed occurs so frequently, that the Synod cannot help suggesting to the members of their body and the churches committed to their oversight, the importance of a serious and careful inquiry into its cause. An increase of true piety and christian knowledge, such as may reasonably be expected in a *real* revival of religion, certainly does not produce the deplorable effects adverted to: nor ought it to be looked for from the addition of new converts to the church. But, whatever may be the cause, the fact is unquestionable, that a powerful excitement on the subject of religion rarely takes place, without a subsequent decline of piety, and a degree of insensibility proportioned to the warmth of feeling before produced. It is frequent, too, for jealousies, divisions, and dissensions to creep into churches, where, not long before, all appeared to be full of love, joy, and holy zeal—Thus Religion incurs reproach, the name of Christ is dishonoured, and a stumbling block is thrown in the way of unbelievers. Sufficient evidence of these melancholy truths has been afforded, to render the inquiry suggested necessary; and to

make it the duty of the Synod to caution the churches against these evils."

The Editor of the *Evangelical Witness*, in remarking on this statement, observes:

"We admire the honesty of this southern Synod, in this candid and faithful exhibition of the whole truth. We have long witnessed 'the deplorable effects adverted to,' as following the revivals in religion in this northern region of our country, and we could easily verify it in our own immediate neighbourhood. The truth in this business is, the feelings are excited, and the passions fanned into a flame, while the judgment remains unenlightened."

THE MORAL VALUE OF AN ACTION.

The degree of virtue in a given action should be universally estimated by the supposed excellence of the motive. Also the degree of vice should be estimated by the supposed meanness or malignity of the motive. The same external act may be either more or less virtuous, more or less vicious, or perfectly indifferent, and destitute of all moral quality, in exact proportion to the moral value of the motive. As for instance, a person delivers his purse into the hands of another. It is required to determine the moral value of the action.

1. It was a child delivering up his toy; it was an idiot, or lunatic, parting with that, the value of which it was incapable of judging. Reason was wanting; the action has no moral quality.

2. It was yielded to superior force. Volition is wanting, and consequently moral quality.

3. It was given voluntarily, but without inclination or design, good or bad; it was the act of pure free will. The supposition is impossible; but if true, the action wanting motive, would be destitute of moral quality.

4. It was delivered as a bribe for the

commission of a crime. The motive is detestable and the action proportionally vicious.

5. It was the promised reward of a crime committed. The motive is still base and the action is vicious, though perhaps not in so great a degree.

6. It was delivered to a highwayman under the impression of terror. The motive is innocent; the action is neither virtuous nor vicious.

7. It was the payment of a just debt. The motive is virtuous; the action laudable.

8. It was given to charity, but from a motive of ostentation. The motive is contemptible and such likewise is the action.

9. It was given from compassion, but without discretion. The motive is moderately good, and the action proportionally such.

10. It was given by benevolence under the direction of prudence. The dignity of the action rises with the dignity of the motive.

11. It was the gift of benevolence, guided by discretion, and animated with piety.

This combination of the best motives constitutes the action in the highest degree virtuous.

Pinnock's Mental Philosophy.

REFLECTIONS.

From a Cincinnati paper.

"Ministers exhort to a contempt of riches, of glory, of pride, of pleasure, of personal decorations and indulgences; and while they thus exhort, they are clad in purple and fine linen—they ascend pulpits upon steps covered with carpets, and sustain themselves by winding mahogany hand rails—they kneel and rest their arms upon cushions covered with scarlet damask—a vaulted roof is their canopy, and the music of the organ delighteth their senses. They cry aloud, riches are vain—and demand contributions of money. They condemn personal decorations, and lift up their arms clad in rich vesture, with

decorations of white linen around their necks. They enlarge upon the vice of indulging appetites, and hasten to dine upon roast meats with gravies and spices!"

POPULATION OF CITIES.

The following curious statistical account is given in the Cassel Almanack for the year 1826—The 100 most populous cities on the globe are—Jeddo, in Japan, 1,680,000; Pekin, 1,500,000; London, 1,274,000; Hans-Ischen, 1,100,000; Calcutta, 900,000; Madras, 817,000; Nankin, 800,000; Congo Ischen, 800,000; Paris, 717,300; Wuts Chani, 600,000; Constantino-ple, 597,800; Benares, 530,000; Kio, 520,726; Su Ischen, 500,000; Hong Ischen, 500,000, &c. The fortieth on the list is Berlin, containing 193,000, and the last Bristol, 87,800. Among the 100 cities three contain more than a million; nine from half a million to one million; 23 from 200,000 to 500,000; 56 from 1 to 200,000; six from 87 to 100,000. Of these 100 cities 58 are in Asia, and 32 in Europe, of which 4 are in Germany, 4 in France, 5 in Italy, 8 in England, 3 in Spain; 5 in Africa, and 5 in America.

[From the Examiner, printed at Auburn, New York.]

BLASPHEMY!

As an evidence of the "ravings of fanaticism and roaring of superstition" so prevalent among a certain few in this place, we give publicity to the following statement of facts, of the truth of which we assure the public that testimony can be adduced by two respectable witnesses.

A Mr. Hornell, a student in the theological seminary, lately visited a young lady of this village, for whose "soul" he expressed great concern. After the usual interrogatories, by which he ascertained she was not a *professor* of religion, he told her "if she did not repent *that night* she would certainly be damned!" He conde-

scended, however, to allow her *two minutes* to reflect upon the subject and decide upon her fate. The two minutes expired, and the lady not having made her election, this long-faced hypocrite with great emphasis, exclaimed—"O thou wretch! an angel in heaven is this instant recording your destiny!—*You are eternally damned!*"

SALE OF PEWS.

[From the *Boston Recorder* of March 31.]

The sale of pews in the new meeting house, Hanover street, took place on Monday last. The whole number of pews, above and below, is 166—which were valued in the aggregate (four only being reserved) at 36,000 dollars. On the above day 82 pews were sold, at an aggregate of 23,674 dollars, including 1279 dollars over and above the valuation thereon, being the amount paid for the privilege of choice. The highest premium bid was 105 dollars, upon a pew valued at 450 dollars. Twelve pews valued at the same rate, were all chosen in the early part of the sale. Of the remaining 80 pews, valued at 13,605 dollars, several have since been applied for and purchased at the rate of valuation.

[We read of no sale of pews in the New Testament.]

COMMUNICATION.

At a late concert of sacred music in this city, the Rev. Dr. Ely gave notice that the music would be repeated on the following Monday evening, when a Missionary sermon would be preached, and a collection taken up to aid the funds. He requested that those who could give cents only would stay away and not occupy the seats of those who could give silver—for, said he, we have too many cents in our bags on all occasions. He should be glad of quarter dollars, half dollars, or even dollars; but, said he, every person coming on that occasion is expected to give at least twelve and a half cents. I repeat

it, said he, no person is expected to come at that time without a 'leven-penny-bit in his pocket. H.

The "Dr." had better been dreaming again about *Retrospective Theology* and the *world of spirits*, than to have expressed himself in *such a manner* on *such a delicate subject*. It is an old proverb, that "beggars should not be choosers," or take it upon themselves to dictate how much or what sort of coin shall be given them. In the present instance the "Rev. Dr." fairly outraged this good old maxim, and the result was as might have been expected—few, if we are rightly informed, attended to hear the "*sacred music*," and the amount collected was but small.

If the "Dr." continues so inflexible about having 'leven-penny-bits, he may be served as another "Reverend" preacher in this city was some time since. In taking round the bags for collection, the deacons discovered an unusual quantity of bright pieces thrown in, and heard the animating sound as they jingled together. This induced them to think they had been very successful on the occasion, when lo! on emptying out the contents of their money bags, they found they had been gathering bits of tin cut to a suitable size to resemble silver currency.

Since writing the above remarks, the following has been received through the medium of the post office.

Mr. Editor—Within the last month there was a famous concert held in the Rev. Dr. Ely's church—for what purpose I did not learn.—Before the audience dispersed, the Doctor informed them that a sermon would be preached on the following Monday evening for the benefit of the missionary cause, if I understood aright. In his address he made use of words to the following effect—"You that cannot bring a 'leven-penny-bit had better stay away to make room for those who can." A pretty impertinent remark in my opinion, and

certainly gained him no credit with the thinking part of his audience.

AN AUDITOR.

For the Reformer.

Mr. Editor,—Your readers will recollect that some time since notice was taken in the Reformer of the Maumee Mission in the State of Ohio. The friends of that mission, alarmed, and fearful that the public impressions might be such as to dry up the sources of contribution, in order to prepare the public mind for another milking of the goats, traversed the northern counties of Ohio, exhibiting a PIOUS young squaw belonging to the mission school, who doubtless was selected as a specimen of the success of the undertaking, to convince the minds of the wavering of the importance of patronising its further prosecution. She was attended by a suitable train of the clergy and their satellites. Much parade accompanied the exhibition, and it was confidently expected that it would not be long before the friends of missions would be called on to aid the cause of the Lord against the mighty. But contrary to all reasonable calculation a degree of retiring modesty has been observed, altogether unaccountable until the secret has at length leaked out. Her ladyship, who was the principal machinery in the drama, belonged to the lightfingered gentry, and had given specimens of her adroitness whenever opportunity presented.

We can impute but little blame to this daughter of the forest when we consider her late education. The aborigines of this country before contracting an acquaintance with the whites, are apparently a most happy people, remarkably hospitable, and strictly honest—possessing a sense of honour and an elevation of mind not surpassed by those of any nation; but let a horde of intermeddling priests be introduced among them, and how soon are those virtues fatally obscured! The gold becomes dim and the most fine

gold is changed.* They discover that the grand object of those who have undertaken to be their guides, whom they have revered and almost adored as patterns of piety and disinterested benevolence, is wealth; and witness some of the means by which it is acquired. Is it any wonder then that all sense of moral obligation is lost in the shoreless and fathomless ocean of the fashionable religion of the times? For it has puzzled wiser heads than we can expect to find among the natives, to discover the moral difference between robbing people of their property by false pretences or by theft. The laws correct the latter, while the former being fostered by the superstition and folly of the weaker part of community, is vastly more extensive and deleterious in its effects.

Here we see the result of one of those popular projects for civilizing and christianizing the heathen, which has cost our simple but well meaning citizens not much short of 20,000 dollars for this single establishment; and years of painful labour and privation to all those whose disinterested philanthropy induced them to engag  personally in the cause. And here is another evidence that our mode of civilizing and christianizing the children of nature has only communicated our vices without mixture, which has in consequence almost exterminated that unfortunate race. PENN.

FRENCH REVOLUTION.

The French revolution produced incalculable blessings to that country. Before that revolution, one third of the property of the kingdom was in the hands of the clergy; the rest in the hands of the nobility.—*Livingston's speech.*

* The christian religion in its purity is every way calculated to improve mankind and make them better; and the circumstance, that the Indians are generally only made worse by the introduction of our missionaries and their assistants among them, is a sufficient evidence that they possess not genuine but only a spurious christianity.—[*Ed. Reformer.*]

Second Street Baptist Church.

It was mentioned in a late number of the Reformer, that there had been a contention in the Second Street Baptist Church of this city. The ground work of this disagreement appears to have been laid some years back, when their honest minded and independent pastor, Henry Holcombe, came out in opposition to the practice of christians engaging in war and bloodshed, and endeavoured to show that taking the lives of our fellow beings was not reconcilable to loving them as ourselves, nor consistent with the spirit of the gospel. This doctrine, to many of the Baptists who considered it their privilege to be allowed to kill their enemies, was neither palatable nor popular, while the majority of the congregation sided with their pastor. From that time an opposition was carried on by the war party, more or less openly, which did not terminate with the death of their worthy and faithful pastor. After that event, indeed, they took a more bold stand, and though quite the smallest number, they undertook to have the sole rule and management in the church. In fact, they aimed to exclude the majority from the church, and have all its property and immunities themselves. For this purpose they convened a body of ministers like minded with themselves. These were denominated a council, and this council proceeded among other resolutions to pass the following:—That the acting majority of the Baptist Church in Second Street had departed from "some of the important principles in our confession of faith," and that the minority were "the legitimate Church, and entitled to all the property, rights and immunities of the particular Baptist Church, commonly called the First Baptist Church in Philadelphia."

Notwithstanding this bold manœuvre and apparent triumph of the war party, they were ultimately wholly defeated in their designs, and reduced themselves to the very condition they thought to bring others. In the Baptist society, with much propriety, a council of ministers have but little power. The greatest number of votes in each congregation must decide all differences among them; and in the present instance, all the congregation had to do was to call a vote on the matter, which resulted in excluding the war party from being members of the church, and they now meet by themselves. The zeal and perseverance to prove others not to be sound in the faith, and to exclude them from the church, has terminated in their

own condemnation and expulsion,—and thus they have fallen into the pit which they were digging for their more peaceable brethren.

We learn from the last New York *Telescope*, that the "Right Rev." Bishop Hobart, or some of his adherents, have attempted a prosecution against the Editor of that paper, for comparing a splendid and costly Episcopal meeting-house, lately erected in that city, to a theatre, and the Bishop and the priest to actors.—We think the resemblance a very striking one, and admire that the Bishop should not have more sense than to get offended by the comparison. For our own part, we should have no objection to stand in the place of the Editor of the *Telescope*, and let the case come fully before the public, in order that priestcraft might be made more fully manifest to the people of this country.

THE PRESS.

The Press is an engine, which, when guided by the unerring light of truth, is mighty to the pulling down the strong holds of error, and of establishing the civil and religious liberties of man on a basis not easily to be shaken. It was with this instrument, guided by the light of reason and revelation, that Luther made the Papal power, which had subjugated all Europe to its domain, tremble to its centre; and gave priestly domination a defeat from which it can never recover. And it is, perhaps, by this engine, at no distant day, that every species of usurpation, superstition, and error, with sects and parties, is destined to be overthrown, to rise no more for ever. [Late paper.]

Decline of Superstition.—The number of pilgrims which visited Rome in 1750, when a jubilee was proclaimed, was, at the opening of the Holy Gate, 1400, and in the week which followed Christmas 8400. This year only *thirty-six* pilgrims attended the opening of the Holy Gate, and but 440 arrived during the ensuing week. [There are still too many.]

[From the Buffalo (N.Y.) Gospel Advocate.]

ANECDOTE—A pious maiden, somewhat stricken in years, who is a zealous Baptist, in this village, was recently, while her head was loaded with *false curls*, inveighing most sharply against worldly amusements, vanities, pleasures, &c. to a young school miss whose opinions did not exactly coincide with her own. At length,

getting weary of her continual harangue, the person to whom she addressed herself replied, "Religion, madam, is a good thing; but when I become a convert to your opinions, I shall be silent upon the subject of *worldly vanity* until I can abandon the use of *false curls*!" The sermon was spoiled, and the preacheress lost all presence of mind by this unexpected rebuff.

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FOR THE REFORMER.

"Believe not every spirit."

There is a spirit that denies
The lowly life our Saviour sought,
His meek example would despise
And the humility he taught;
But honours of high heav'n it claims,
As tho' commission'd from its throne,
Titles of worth and reverend names,
Such as are due to God alone.

This is the spirit we behold,
And proves the Scriptures true,
For its false teachers, as foretold,
Make merchandise of you;
Far as our western wilds extend,
And on our cultur'd plains,
Far as our waving harvests bend,
This sordid spirit reigns.

Its harpies are upon the wing,
Its banners are unfurl'd,
Orations from its temples ring
The wisdom of the world.
As it has toil'd for ages past,
So will it persevere;
What treasures has it not amass'd
To build a kingdom here?

This kingdom rais'd for antichrist,
Although the christian name it bear,
By which all nations are entic'd;
What strangers to the cross they are.
This kingdom as its deeds avow,
If earthly powers refuse to aid,
By fraud must be supported now,
And every wily snare is laid.

Though tracts and volumes are compil'd
To bind a nation to its creed,
Yet pure religion, undefil'd,
Is this—to visit in their need
The widow and the fatherless;
Assuage their sorrow, sooth their pain,
And while amid this wilderness
Unsullied from the world remain. L.

—
The following is from the Trenton (N.J.) Federalist:

"Lewis Phillip Hunt, from the western country, will practice law in the high courts of judicature, in the cities of New York and Philadelphia. All business con-

fided to his care, will receive his most indefatigable punctuality. He can only receive fees and cases for argumentation during court terms, as a multiplicity of political, *theatrical*, *theological*, and private affairs engross the balance of his attention."

—
A correspondent in Virginia writes that not long since one of the Presbyterian churches in those parts "tottered and almost fell to the ground, in consequence of one of the pillars getting so drunk that he was not able to support his own frame." He adds,—“What will be his fate I have not yet learned; but I suppose he will pay up his arrearages and add something more for the next year, and receive remission of sins from the hands of the priest.”

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PROPHECIES.

Letters from Bucharest say that the Prophecies of Argothangelos, the first publication of which was three centuries ago, and which were reprinted at Bucharest in 1812, by order of Russia, announced that *Constantinople will be taken in 1827*. The death of all the Emperors, down to Alexander, is exactly predicted in the most positive manner by this prophet, as well as the expedition of the French to Moscow. [U. S. Gazette.

[The truth or falsehood of the prophecy respecting Constantinople will soon be known.]

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A European writer, speaking of the state of religion in Germany, says: "Every thing seems to aim at the gradual extermination of the Protestant faith."

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A new thing under the sun—A meeting house has been sold in the state of New York, at the suit of a clergyman, for the payment of his salary.

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Benevolence—There is far more satisfaction in doing than receiving good. To relieve the oppressed is the most glorious act a man can be capable of; it is in some measure doing the business of God and Providence; and is attended with a heavenly pleasure, unknown but to those who are beneficent and liberal.

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* "Amicus" is received and will appear in our next.

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